



## INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(51) International Patent Classification <sup>4</sup> :  G01V 3/08, H02G 9/00		A1	(11) International Publication Number: WO 89/06810  (43) International Publication Date: 27 July 1989 (27.07.89)
<p>(21) International Application Number: PCT/GB89/00031</p> <p>(22) International Filing Date: 13 January 1989 (13.01.89)</p> <p>(31) Priority Application Number: 8800879</p> <p>(32) Priority Date: 15 January 1988 (15.01.88)</p> <p>(33) Priority Country: GB</p> <p>(71) Applicant (<i>for all designated States except US</i>): SCIENTIFIC GENERICS LIMITED [GB/GB]; King's Court, Kirkwood Road, Cambridge CB4 2PF (GB).</p> <p>(72) Inventors; and</p> <p>(75) Inventors/Applicants (<i>for US only</i>) : CROSSFIELD, Michael, David [GB/GB]; Perne Drift, Burton End, West Wickham, Cambridge CB1 6SD (GB). RAVEN, Anthony [GB/GB]; The Old Orchard, Chapel Lane, Melbourne, Hertfordshire (GB).</p>		<p>(74) Agent: FRANK B. DEHN &amp; CO., Imperial House, 15-19 Kingsway, London WC2B 6UZ (GB).</p> <p>(81) Designated States: AT (European patent), AU, BE (European patent), CH (European patent), DE (European patent), DK, FI, FR (European patent), GB, GB (European patent), IT (European patent), JP, LU (European patent), NL (European patent), NO, SE (European patent), US.</p> <p>Published <i>With international search report.</i></p>	
<p><b>(54) Title:</b> INSTALLATION AND DETECTION METHOD FOR CONCEALED OBJECTS</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Signal Produced by Interrogating with 1 KHz Field</b></p>			
<p><b>(57) Abstract</b></p> <p>A method for installation and subsequent location of a concealed object such as an underground cable or pipe comprises locating on or near the object a detection element formed of a ferromagnetic alloy having a high permeability and low coercivity for providing a characteristic magnetic response to an interrogating magnetic field whereby the object can be subsequently located. A detecting apparatus produces an interrogating magnetic field, and incorporates means for detecting a returned signal in accordance with the magnetic response of the element.</p>			

**FOR THE PURPOSES OF INFORMATION ONLY**

Codes used to identify States party to the PCT on the front pages of pamphlets publishing international applications under the PCT.

AT Austria	FR France	ML Mali
AU Australia	GA Gabon	MR Mauritania
BB Barbados	GB United Kingdom	MW Malawi
BE Belgium	HU Hungary	NL Netherlands
BG Bulgaria	IT Italy	NO Norway
BJ Benin	JP Japan	RO Romania
BR Brazil	KP Democratic People's Republic of Korea	SD Sudan
CF Central African Republic	KR Republic of Korea	SE Sweden
CG Congo	LI Liechtenstein	SN Senegal
CH Switzerland	LK Sri Lanka	SU Soviet Union
CM Cameroon	LU Luxembourg	TD Chad
DE Germany, Federal Republic of	MC Monaco	TG Togo
DK Denmark	MG Madagascar	US United States of America
FI Finland		

- 1 -

Installation and detection method  
for concealed objects

This invention relates to methods for installing and subsequently detecting concealed objects, in particular service installations such as pipes, cable ducts, fibre optic cables etc which are located under-  
5 ground or under water.

There is a need to be able to detect a concealed service installation for the purposes of carrying out repairs to the installation, and also to avoid inadvertant damage to the installation as a result  
10 of roadworks, excavations etc unconnected with the installation concerned. The need is enhanced by the ever-increasing density of service installations.

Whilst, previously, underground electric cables have been detected by their electromagnetic radiation,  
15 optical fibre communications installations, which are becoming increasingly common, provide no natural emission which can be remotely detected. In the case of metal pipes, known underground metal detecting techniques have been used, but these generally provide  
20 poor discrimination and are of course inapplicable to plastic and concrete pipes and ducts, for example.

It has also been proposed to provide resonant inductive/capacitive circuits buried at intervals close to an installation for use as dectectors.  
25 Such units provide a resonant response to a driving electromagnetic field from detecting units similar to conventional metal detectors. Such "active" units are however relatively costly so that the installation interval has, in practice, been large (typically  
30 100m) and the response obtained can be affected by nearby metal objects.

Viewed from one aspect the invention provides a method of installing an underground or underwater

- 2 -

object which comprises locating on or near the object  
a detection element formed of a ferromagnetic alloy  
having a high permeability and low coercivity for  
providing a characteristic magnetic response to an  
5 interrogating magnetic field so that the object can  
be subsequently located.

The invention extends to a method of locating  
an underground or underwater object which has been  
installed in this way, comprising generating a magnetic  
10 field to which the detection element is exposed,  
and detecting a magnetic response of said detection  
element to determine the location of the object.

Viewed from a further aspect the invention  
provides an underground or underwater object in combination  
15 with a detection element formed of a ferromagnetic  
alloy having a high permeability and low coercivity  
and providing a characteristic magnetic response  
to a detection magnetic field to produce a signal  
whereby the installation can be located.

20 The invention is particularly applicable to  
underground or submarine service installations, such  
as gas and water pipes, cable ducts and fibre optics  
cables in respect of which an inexpensive and effective  
detection system may be provided.

25 A portable detecting apparatus can be provided  
to generate suitable magnetic fields with which to  
interrogate the detection element, and may include  
a receiver system which responds to particular magnetic  
responses from the element.

30 In accordance with the invention, the alloy  
of which the detection element is formed has a high  
intrinsic permeability, typically greater than 10,000  
and a low coercive force, typically less than 20  
Amps/metre. Particularly suitable alloys providing  
35 appropriate magnetic characteristics are amorphous  
alloys i.e. so-called metallic glasses. Suitable  
alloys are commercially available from Unitica of  
Japan and Vacuumschmeltz of Germany.

- 3 -

It will be appreciated that, since materials having comparable magnetic characteristics to those outlined above are unlikely to be found naturally in the proximity of an underground or underwater 5 installation, the method in accordance with the invention is unlikely to be affected by other nearby underground objects.

It is desirable that the detection element should be formed in such a way that the apparent 10 permeability is not seriously degraded by demagnetisation effects. Preferably, therefore, the element should be in the form of a thin strip or wire, or a thin film. The wire, strip or film is preferably in the form of discrete segments. In the case 15 of a service installation it is envisaged that a plurality of detection elements would be spaced along the installation. Typical dimensions for the elements might be 40 mm x 1 mm x 0.03 mm for a thin strip, or 40 mm x 40 mm x 0.001 mm for a film.

20 In the case of service installations such as pipes and cables, detection elements are preferably attached at frequent intervals such as one every one or two metres. The elements can be incorporated into adhesive labels for attachment to the service 25 installation at the time of installation, or alternatively could be incorporated into an installation at the time of its manufacture e.g. by being embedded into a pipe or fibre optics cable. It is also envisaged that the detection elements could be located separately 30 from though near the serice installation. For example, in the case of an underground power cable it is known to provide a physical warning means in the form of a marker cable buried somewhat above the pipe, and detection elements in accordance with the invention 35 could be carried by such cable.

In one form, a detection apparatus generates an oscillating field in the detection region of one or more frequencies. The non-linear magnetic response

- 4 -

of the detection element gives rise to reradiated harmonics of the drive field which are detected by a sensor unit. These harmonics are highly distinctive of the detection element and provide high discrimination  
5 against significant amounts of other metals. Typically a detector system is capable of detecting down to  $0.25\text{mm}^3$  of material in a volume of  $2\text{m}^3$ .

A detection apparatus for use in accordance with the present invention comprises, in one form,  
10 a drive coil or coils which interrogate the ground underneath the apparatus with one or more frequency signals and detects the harmonic or intermodulation products reradiated by the detection element formed of high permeability, low coercivity alloy associated  
15 with the object to be detected. Such apparatus can be packaged to resemble a conventional metal detector or in some other suitable format.

Whilst the present invention is particularly applicable to the location of buried and submarine  
20 service installations, the method may be applied to other concealed objects which require subsequent detection.

A preferred system for implementing the method in accordance with the invention will now be described,  
25 by way of example only, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Figure 1 illustrates the idealised magnetic response of a high permeability, low coercive force ferromagnetic alloy from which detection elements  
30 in accordance with the invention are formed;

Figure 2 illustrates schematically an interrogating magnetic field together with the response received from an element in accordance with the invention,  
and

35 Figure 3 illustrates alternative embodiments of a detection apparatus.

As shown in Figure 1, a high permeability, low coercive force alloy such as an amorphous metal

- 5 -

alloy i.e. a metallic glass provides a non-linear magnetic response. In one embodiment of detection apparatus, an alternating magnetic field in the detection region at a frequency in the order of 1 KHz interrogates

5 a detection element in accordance with the invention, the non-linear magnetic response of which gives rise to re-radiated harmonics of the interrogating frequency, as shown in Figure 2, and these can be detected by a tuned receiving system. The harmonics produced

10 extend to very high orders and are very distinctive of the alloy from which the detection element is formed. This provides high discrimination against significant amounts of other metal which typically only produce low order harmonics, and thus,

15 in accordance with the invention, buried service installations, for example, can be detected with high accuracy. A preferred detector system is capable of detecting down to  $0.25 \text{ mm}^2$  of material in a volume of  $2 \text{ m}^2$ .

20 Detection apparatus for use in a method in accordance with the present invention can operate on similar principles to known security devices used in retail outlets to detect shop-lifting. In one form a drive coil or coils is arranged to interrogate

25 beneath the detector with one or more alternating magnetic fields, and detects one or more harmonic or intermodulation products re-radiated by the ferromagnetic detection element. Block diagrams of two known detector systems suitable for use in the present

30 invention are illustrated in Figure 3. The operation of such systems will be known to those with the relevant skill, and will not be described in further detail. Whilst previously such apparatus have been incorporated, for example, at the exit points of shops to detect

35 unauthorised removal of goods, in accordance with the invention the apparatus is preferably packaged to resemble a conventional metal detector, or in some other suitable format. It will be appreciated

- 6 -

that generally, in contrast to the use of such apparatus as security devices, the detection element in accordance with the invention will be fixedly located, typically in an underground environment, whilst the detection  
5 apparatus is mobile.

The size and shape of the detection elements, together with the size and dimensions of the detector coil, and the interrogating field amplitude and frequency etc may all vary. As an indication, however, a detection  
10 element in the form of a thin strip approximately 40 mm long can be detected underground at a depth of the order of the diameter of the detector coil with a resolution of the order of the coil radius.

- 7 -

Claims:

1. A method of installing an underground or underwater object which comprises locating on or near the object a detection element formed of a ferromagnetic alloy having a high permeability and low coercivity for providing a characteristic magnetic response to an interrogating magnetic field whereby the object can be subsequently located.
2. A method of detecting an underground or underwater object which has been installed by a method in accordance with claim 1, comprising generating a magnetic field to which the detection element is exposed, and detecting a magnetic response of said detection element to determine the location of the object.
3. A method as claimed in claim 1 or 2 wherein the object comprises a service installation.
4. A method as claimed in claim 3 wherein the service installation comprises an underground duct, pipe or cable.
5. A method as claimed in any preceding claim wherein the detection element is in the form of a thin sheet, strip or wire of said alloy.
6. A method as claimed in claim 5 wherein a plurality of said elements in the form of discrete lengths of alloy sheet, strip or wire are spaced along the object.
7. A method as claimed in any preceding claim wherein the alloy from which the detection element is formed has an intrinsic permeability greater than 10,000 and a coercive force of less than 20 Amps/metre.
8. A method as claimed in claim 7 wherein the detection element is formed of an amorphous metal alloy.
9. A method as claimed in any preceding claim in which detection elements comprise or are incorporated in adhesive labels.

- 8 -

10. An underground or underwater object in combination with a detection element formed of a ferromagnetic alloy having a high permeability and low coercivity and providing a characteristic magnetic response  
5 to a detection magnetic field to produce a signal whereby the installation can be detected.

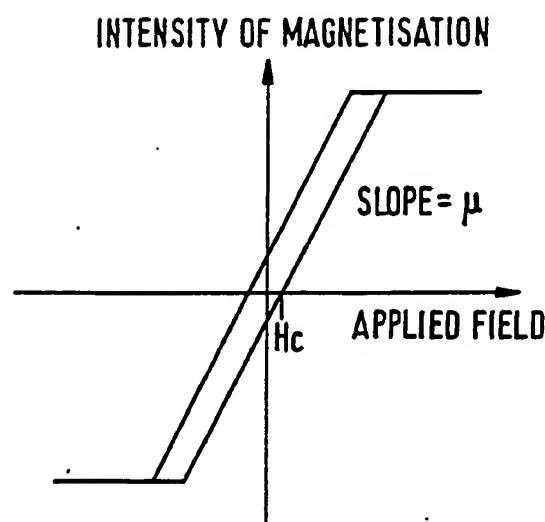


FIG. 1 Idealised Magnetic Response of Marker

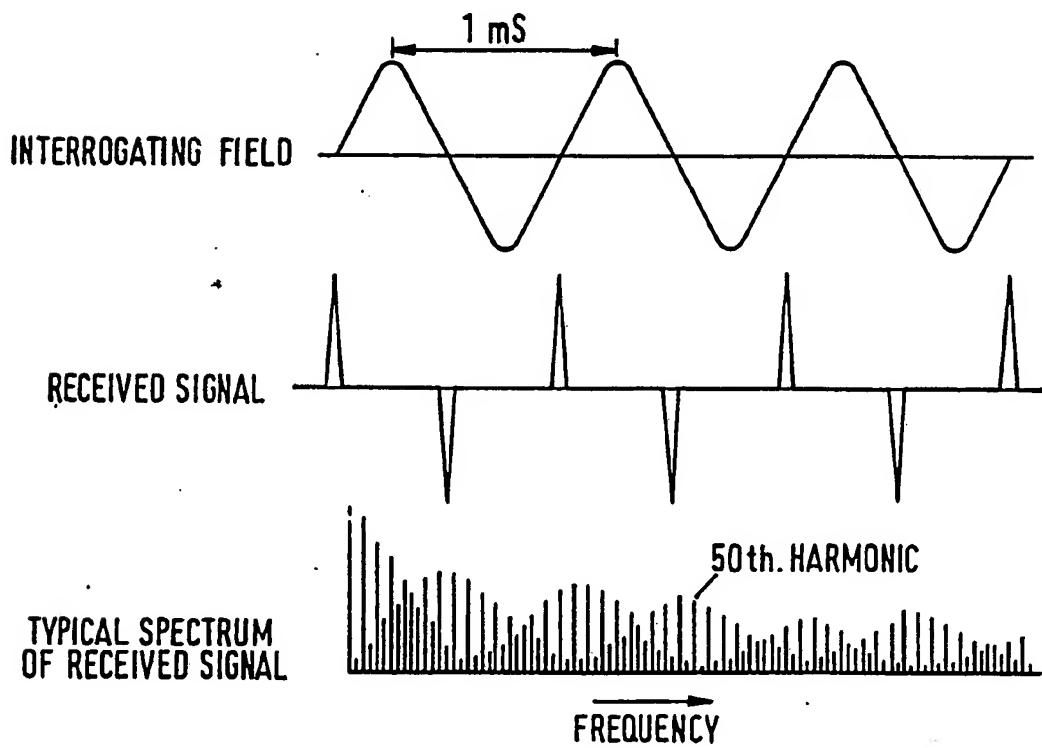
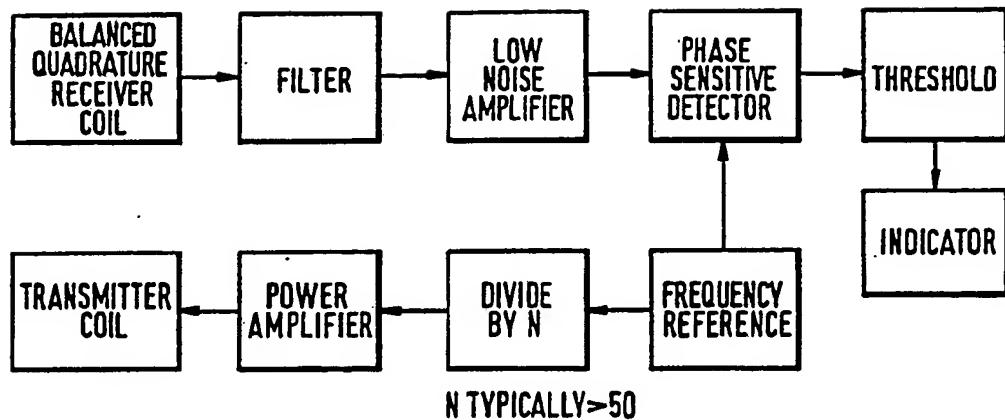
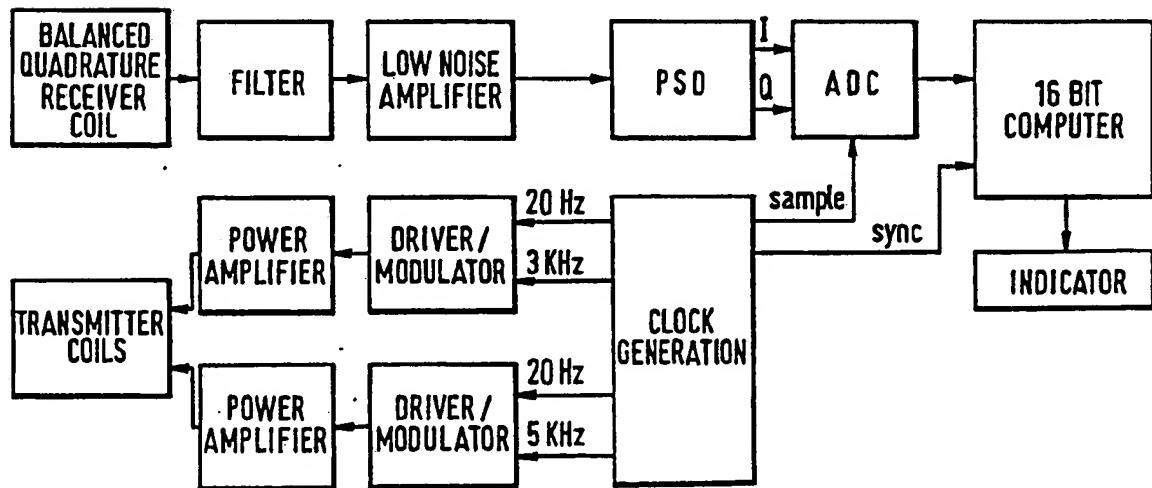


FIG. 2 Signal Produced by Interrogating with 1 KHz Field



Simple single frequency narrowband detection system.

FIG. 3 DETECTION SYSTEMS.



3 frequency detection system with improved discrimination.

# INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No. PCT/GB 89/00031

## I. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER (if several classification symbols apply, indicate all) \*

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both National Classification and IPC  
IPC4: G 01 V 3/08, H 02 G 9/00

## II. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum Documentation Searched †

Classification System	Classification Symbols
IPC4	G 01 V, H 02 G, G 01 S, G 08 B
Documentation Searched other than Minimum Documentation to the Extent that such Documents are Included in the Fields Searched *	

## III. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT\*

Category *	Citation of Document, ** with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages †‡	Relevant to Claim No. †‡
Y	US, A, 4660025 (F B HUMPHREY) 21 April 1987, see the whole document --	1,2,5-8, 10
Y	US, A, 4581524 (E B HOEKMAN ET AL) 8 April 1986, see column 2, line 20 - column 3, line 11; figures 1,2 --	1-6,8- 10
Y	US, A, 4553136 (P M ANDERSON, III ET AL) 12 November 1985, see the whole document --	1-6,8- 10
Y	DE, A1, 3106661 (KABEL- UND METALLWERKE GUTEHOFFNUNGSHÜTTE AG) 9 September 1982, see the whole document --	1-10

\* Special categories of cited documents: †

- "A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance
- "E" earlier document but published on or after the international filing date
- "L" document which may throw doubt on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)
- "O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means
- "P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention

"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step

"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art.

"G" document member of the same patent family

## IV. CERTIFICATION

Date of the Actual Completion of the International Search  
21st April 1989

Date of Mailing of this International Search Report

27 APR 1989

International Searching Authority

EUROPEAN PATENT OFFICE

Signature of Authorized Officer

P.C.G. VAN DER PUTTEN

III. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT (CONTINUED FROM THE SECOND SHEET)		
Category *	Citation of Document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to Claim No
Y	US, A, 3665511 (J E WOLF) 23 May 1972, see column 1, line 1 - line 60; figure 1 --	1-10
Y	EP, A2, 224834 (REEF INDUSTRIES, INC.) 10 June 1987, see the whole document -----	1-10

Form PCT-ISA:210 (extra sheet) (January 1985)

**ANNEX TO THE INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT  
ON INTERNATIONAL PATENT APPLICATION NO. PCT/GB 89/00031**

SA 26404

This annex lists the patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned international search report.  
The members are as contained in the European Patent Office FDP file on 03/03/89.  
The European Patent Office is in no way liable for these particulars which are merely given for the purpose of information.

Patent document cited in search report	Publication date	Patent family member(s)		Publication date
US-A- 4660025	21/04/87	BE-A-	903717	14/03/86
		GB-A-	2167627	29/05/86
		SE-A-	8505551	27/05/86
		FR-A-	2573895	30/05/86
		DE-A-	3541536	05/06/86
		JP-A-	61153799	12/07/86
		NL-A-	8503268	16/06/86
		US-A-	4686516	11/08/87
		CA-A-	1245321	22/11/88
<hr/>				
US-A- 4581524	08/04/86	EP-A-	0123557	31/10/84
		AU-D-	27157/84	01/11/84
		AU-A-	557110	04/12/86
		CA-A-	1220553	14/04/87
<hr/>				
US-A- 4553136	12/11/85	AU-D-	23609/84	09/08/84
		JP-A-	59161794	12/09/84
		EP-A-	0121649	17/10/84
		CA-A-	1213334	28/10/86
		AU-A-	576312	25/08/88
<hr/>				
DE-A1- 3106661	09/09/82	NONE		
<hr/>				
US-A- 3665511	23/05/72	NONE		
<hr/>				
EP-A2- 224834	10/06/87	EP-A-	0225536	16/06/87
		AU-D-	65016/86	04/06/87
		SE-A-	8604741	04/06/87
		SE-A-	8604742	04/06/87
		US-A-	4699838	13/10/87
		US-A-	4781958	01/11/88
<hr/>				

EPO FORM FORM

For more details about this annex : see Official Journal of the European Patent Office, No. 12/82